
Volunteer Involvement policy

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1 Preamble

The contents of and the commitments that council makes in this policy are not intended to be and should not be interpreted to be any more than a statement of the City of Onkaparinga's general position in relation to those matters, and to facilitate its aspirations wherever it is reasonable to do so.

2 Policy purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to ensure best practice in volunteer involvement through effective leadership, management and support of our volunteers.

It is acknowledged that any legislative requirement which affects Council will take precedence over Council's policies and procedures.

3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- individuals who are registered as volunteers to support the delivery of our programs, services and activities
- our employees involved in the management, supervision and support of volunteers.

This policy excludes:

- individuals and groups undertaking acts of citizenship or informal volunteering within their communities
- volunteers of incorporated bodies in a partnership arrangement with council
- reference, advisory, resident and business groups
- volunteers of community centres managed by independent boards
- employees of for profit organisations undertaking corporate volunteering activities
- community forums and engagement participants
- individuals undertaking work experience, internships or student placements
- participants of Work for the Dole initiatives (excluding Newstart Allowance volunteers)
- Elected Members in their capacity as an elected member.

4 Definitions

City of Onkaparinga Volunteer	An individual who is approved by, and registered with, the City of Onkaparinga to support the delivery of our services, activities, programs or projects.
Culture	The way a group of people engages with each other. The shared values and behaviours of an organisation.
National Standards for Volunteer Involvement	Best practice standards for developing and reviewing how volunteers are involved in organisations.
Volunteering	Time given willingly for the common good and without financial gain.
Volunteer coordinator	An employee who is delegated responsibility to coordinate volunteer activities at the operational level and/or provides regular supervision and support to the volunteer.
Volunteer program	Collective term used to describe a council service, activity, program or project which involves volunteers in its delivery model.
Volunteer Management Framework	Council’s principles, policy, standards, administrative procedures and tools for effective volunteer involvement.

5 Strategic context

We involve volunteers in supporting the delivery of our services, activities, projects and programs to achieve our community plan vision of strong vibrant communities.

Council volunteers reflect the strategic objective within the People theme of inspiring people to contribute and lead. Our volunteers help us to build our capacity to connect closely with our communities.

6 Policy

We value and encourage the involvement of volunteers within appropriate services, activities, programs and projects. Volunteers, in partnership with employees, participate actively in achieving our vision of strong vibrant communities.

We recognise that volunteering is a two way relationship. The City of Onkaparinga is able to enhance the delivery of our services through harnessing the diverse experiences, backgrounds, life skills, knowledge and expertise of our volunteers.

For volunteers, involvement brings a range of personal benefits such as developing social connections, learning new skills, gaining valuable experience for future employment, and a sense of community pride and wellbeing.

We are committed to effective volunteer involvement through organisational leadership, and a culture and structure that supports and values the role of volunteers.

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Our approach to the management of volunteers complies with Australian National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)*, equal opportunity legislation and the requirements of self insurers under the Local Government Mutual Liability Scheme.

7 Principles

- All people have the right to volunteer regardless of their cultural or ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, physical, social and economic position.
- Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valued and integral members of our team.
- Volunteers are consulted in decision making that impacts their volunteer involvement.
- We regularly acknowledge the contribution of volunteers and the benefits to the volunteer, council and our communities.
- The rights of volunteers are protected and they are supported to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.
- Volunteers have responsibilities and are accountable for their actions.

8 Defining employee and volunteer roles

A clear delineation must be evident between the work of employees and volunteers. The tasks undertaken by volunteers must:

- complement the role of employees
- be meaningful and not exploit the good will of the volunteer
- enhance and extend our services
- not replace employee roles
- not threaten the security and job satisfaction of employees.

9 Work Health and Safety

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)* identifies volunteers as 'workers' for the purposes of the Act. Volunteers have the same rights and responsibilities in relation to the provision of a safe working environment and safe work practices.

We have a duty of care to ensure the quality and safety of services and activities that involve volunteers.

10 Risk management and insurance

Our Risk Management framework is inclusive of volunteers to ensure council manages exposure to liabilities resulting from volunteer involvement.

Volunteers are not covered by Return to Work legislation as they are not paid employees. We provide public liability and personal accident insurance for volunteers whilst undertaking approved volunteer duties.

11 Roles and responsibilities

Effective volunteer involvement requires an organisational approach. We have clearly defined lines of authority for the involvement of volunteers.

11.1 Directors Group

Responsibilities

- Create and lead a culture and structure that values the role and impact of volunteer involvement.
- Ensure volunteer involvement is planned and resourced appropriately to achieve our Community Plan vision.
- Communicate to employees and volunteers the City of Onkaparinga's commitment to safe and effective volunteer involvement.

11.2 Managers

Responsibilities

- Manage and lead a supportive environment and culture for volunteer involvement.
- Integrate volunteer involvement in annual business plans and allocate appropriate resources (financial/human/technology).
- Review volunteer involvement regularly in line with organisational safety, risk and quality management frameworks to assess, manage and/or mitigate potential risks to volunteers, council, employees, customers and participants.
- Ensure responsibility for supervision and support of volunteers is assigned to employees with the appropriate classification level, skills, knowledge and experience.

11.3 Team leaders

Responsibilities

- Lead a supportive environment and culture for volunteer involvement.
- Ensure the requirements of council's Volunteer Management framework are consistently applied across all activities and services involving volunteers.
- Identify and secure appropriate resourcing for volunteer involvement.
- Provide support and supervision to volunteer co-ordinators to ensure successful outcomes for both volunteers and employees.
- Provide sufficient time and training opportunities to enable volunteer co-ordinators to adequately carry out their additional responsibilities.
- Monitor volunteer involvement to ensure safety and quality of service delivery to customers and participants.

11.4 Volunteer coordinators

Responsibilities

- Proactively contribute to providing a welcoming, supportive and safe environment for volunteers.
- Provide instruction and assistance to ensure the safety of the volunteering activities to be undertaken.
- Operate within the requirements of council's Volunteer Management framework.
- Ensure that volunteers are involved in meaningful ways that reflect their skills, interests and backgrounds.
- Contribute to planning and evaluation of volunteer involvement.

11.5 HR Business Partner, Volunteer Management

Responsibilities

- Lead a strategic approach to implementing best practice volunteer management across the organisation.
- Monitor compliance with the Volunteer Management framework.
- Advocate for volunteer involvement to ensure the value and impact of volunteers is understood, appreciated and acknowledged across the organisation.
- Identify new volunteering initiatives to address emerging trends and increase the participation, quality and diversity of volunteering experiences.
- Continually review the Volunteer Management framework and associated tools to ensure that opportunities to improve the system are identified and implemented.
- Develop and maintain working relationships with the volunteer sector and appropriate stakeholders.

11.6 Volunteers

Responsibilities

- Understand how volunteer roles support the achievement of our community plan vision.
- Recognise that volunteers have both rights and responsibilities through their voluntary involvement with the City of Onkaparinga.
- Operate within relevant organisational policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Respect our values and practices.

12 Relevant legislation and references

12.1 Legislation

Children's Protection Act 1993

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)

Volunteers Protection Act 2001

Work Health and Safety Act (SA) 2012

12.2 References

Local Government Mutual Liability Scheme 2015, *Covering all Bases: An information Guide for Managing Volunteers in Local Government*

Local Government Volunteer Managers Network 2012, *Volunteer Management in Local Government*

Volunteering Australia 2015, *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement*

Volunteering Canada 2017, *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement*

13 Document control

Author (to whom changes are to be recommended):		
Position	Name	
Joanne Maiden	HR Project Officer	
Stakeholders (audience – engagement groups):		
Directors Group	Relevant managers and team leaders	
Manager Culture and People	Volunteer coordinators	
Team Leader HR	Volunteer Advisory Group	
Team Leader WHS	HR Business Partner Volunteer Management	
Reviewed by:		
Position	Name	Date reviewed
Manager Culture and People	Jessica Tucker	18/07/2018
Team Leader HR	Abigail Warren	05/07/2018
Approved by (document owner):		

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